(क) क्या अजमेर के निकट स्थित घूंघरा क्षेत्र में मिले जस्ता भंडारों में खनन कार्य प्रगति पर है; और

(ख) अप्रैल, 1998 से इस दिशा में क्या प्रगति हुई तथा तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है?

इस्पात और खान मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री रमेश बैस): (क) जी, नहीं।

(ख) प्रश्न नहीं उठता।

Action Plan for Increasing Steel Production

1655. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) the steel quota of the North East States on State-wise basis;

(b) whether the steel production in the country can meet the requirement of the people of the country; and

(c) whether Government have any action plan for increasing the steel production to meet the country's requirement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) After the decontrol of steel in 1992, there is no quota system for distribution of steel in the country except for five priority sectors viz. defence, railways, North East region, exporters of engineering goods and small scale industries corporations of individual states. As per demand projected by the nodal authorities of States/SSICs of North Eastern States, a supply plan/allocation is made by the Development Commissioner for Iron and Steel.

(b) and (c) At present there is no shortage of most items of steel. Producers of steel are constantly orienting their product mix to meet the market needs. Modernisation and expansion of steel plants has been taken up towards this objective. Since 1991, Government has adopted various policy measures to encourage of creation of additional steel production capacities in the private sector. To supplement domestic availability both in terms of quantity and quality, import of all items of steel is freely allowed as per policy.

Improving Financial Performance of SAIL

1656. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) the total investment made so far in PSUs in steel sector and outlay proposed for the current years for upgradation/ modernisation/expansion of capacity/ diversification PSU-wise particularly for units under SAIL.

(b) the financial performance of steel units under SAIL for the last three years—unit-wise with accumulated losses and reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that inspite of heavy investment SAIL units are incurring huge losses year after year; and

(d) if so, the details of action plan formulated to improve financial performance of SAIL units ensuring accountability in performance?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK): (a) Total investment (in terms of depreciated value of fixed assets and capital work in progress) in SAIL Plants and its subsidiaries as on 31.03.1998 and the outlay proposed for 1998-99 for upgradation/modernisation/expansion etc. is as under:

(Rs./Crores)

SAIL Plants	Investment As on 31-3-98	Outlay Proposed in Revised Estimate 1998-99
Bhilai Steel Plant	2695	317
Durgapur Steel Plant	5827	71

SAIL Plants	Investment As on 31-3-98	Outlay Proposed in Revised Estimate 1998-99
Rourkela Steel Plant	5528	437
Bokaro Steel Plant	4278	438
Alloy Steel Plant	182	10
Salem Steel Plant	944	39
Subsidiaries of SAIL		
IISCO	598	10
VISL	175	14

Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd. (VSP): The total investments made in VSP since its inception from Government and other resources stood at Rs. 8529 Crores (as on 31-3-1998) and revised estimates for 1998-99 is Rs. 55.89 Crores.

(b) The financial performance of Steel Plants of SAIL and its subsidiaries for the last three years as well as accumulated Profit/Losses is as under:

(Rs./Crores)

Plant	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Cumulative as on 31-3-98
Bhilai Steel Plant	819	684	701	4226
Durgapur Steel Plant	−174	−236	−509	−2236
Rourkela Steel Plant	−57	−316	−374	−407
Bokaro Steel Plant	806	357	367	4305
Alloy Steel Plant	1	−67	−88	−453
Salem Steel Plant	4	−38	−120	−156
IISCO	−49	−213	−395	−1556
VISL	−37	−102	−84	−81

(−) indicate loss.

Major reasons for losses in these plants include slow down in demand for steel, greater competition from imports, and enhancement in supplies in domestic market, increase in input prices and higher interest cost etc. which could not be fully neutralised by better techno-economic parameters, cost reduction measures and increase in the prices of steel. Some of these plants are operating with old and obsolete technology.

(c) DSP, RSP and SAIL subsidiaries IISCO & VISL are incurring losses continuously during last 3 years.

(d) SAIL has taken number of steps to improve the performance, which inter-alia include reduction in cost by improving the techno-economic parameters, demand oriented production improving quality of products, and increasing sales through aggressive and customer oriented marketing, etc.

Setting up of a steel plant by Australian Company

1657. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether some Australian Company had a plan to set up a steel plant in the country;

(b) if so, the name of the Company; and

(c) the details of the plan submitted by that Australian Company to set up steel plant in the country?

THE MINISTRY OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) No proposal has been received from the